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ABSTRACT

A pilot In-School Suspension Program was inaugurated at one junior high and one senior high school in Montgomery County, Maryland, during 1980-81, in order to provide an alternative to out-of-school suspension. To assess the pilot program's effectiveness, an evaluation study examined rates of and reasons for in-school suspension, length of such suspension, race of suspended students, educational disruption, and recidivism. It was found that the pilot schools made extensive use of the in-school suspension alternative, particularly for less serious disciplinary offenses. However, while teachers and students reported feeling that the program was effective, students with more serious suspension records did not agree. Additionally, relatively high recidivism of students whose first suspension was in-school suggests that negative parental reaction to out-of-school suspension is a major deterrent to student misbehavior. These findings, along with the confirmation for suspended students, indicate that in-school suspension is a viable disciplinary alternative but that several areas require monitoring: (1) students' completion of class assignments while suspended; (2) parental involvement in the in-school suspension process; (3) increases in the overall suspension rate; (4) racial differences; and (5) greater recidivism after in-school suspension. (Author/GC)

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MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

A Preliminary Evaluation of the Pilot In-School Suspension Program, 1980-81

August, 1981

EDWARD ANDREWS
Superintendent of Schools

Prepared by the Department of Educational Accountability

MONTGOMERY COUNTY
PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Executive Summary

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A PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF THE PILOT IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION PROGRAM 1980-81

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

A Pilot In-School Suspension Program was inaugurated at two secondary schools, one junior high school and one senior high school, in MCPS in the 1980-81 school year. The goal of the program was to provide a practical alternative to out-of-school suspension by removing disruptive students from the classroom while providing for these students a continuing educational program and an opportunity to change inappropriate behavior. The present study was undertaken to gather some preliminary information on the in-school program, how it is working, and the ways in which it might be improved in the future. To the extent possible, the impact of the program on student behavior was also assessed.

A case study approach was adopted for this evaluation, with surveys being conducted at the two pilot schools to obtain feedback from administrators, teachers, program staff, and students with regard to how the program was working. In addition, the MCPS Suspension Report Forms (560-6) from each of the schools were reviewed to obtain data concerning rates of assignment to in-school suspension, reasons for assignments, lengths of assignments, and recidivism. For comparative purposes, similar data were also collected from two schools which were not part of the official pilot program but which had developed a less formal variation of in-school suspension on their own.

FINDINGS

Program Implementation

School Suspension Practices

The pilot schools took advantage of the in-school suspension alternative and showed a definite change in practice with the availability of the pilot program and its supports. Overall, 69 percent of the students suspended from the two pilot schools were assigned to in-school suspension at least once. This contrasts with in-school suspension rates of 16 percent in the informal programs. Interestingly, overall suspensions rates also climbed sharply in the pilot schools, suggesting that suspension may be a more frequently utilized discipline practice if it does not mean removing the student from the school building. However, it was also noted that overall, non-white students were significantly less likely than white students to be assigned to in-school suspension. The trend was similar in both of the pilot schools studied. Seventy-four percent of the white students suspended were given in-school suspension in contrast to 61 percent of the non-white students. No explanation for this difference is found in either the severity of the offenses or the recidivism rates of these groups.

Reasons for Assignment to In-School Suspension

Consistent with the description of the in-school suspension program, students tended to be suspended in school for less serious offenses and out of school for more serious offenses. Further, students suspended in school were generally suspended for shorter periods of time than those suspended out of school, and practically always for one to three days only.

Program Impact

Program impact was measured in three different ways: 1) students and teachers were asked to comment on the effectiveness of in-school suspension; 2) recidivism rates of students initially suspended in or out of school were compared; and 3) the educational disruption resulting from suspension was examined.

Perceived Effectiveness

The majority of respondents said that in-school suspension is an effective deterrent to many of the less serious offenses. However, the percentages are far from overwhelming and there are differences between teachers and students and between types of students regarding the perceived effectiveness of the program. Generally, teachers and students who have never been suspended, and students who have been suspended only once, feel that the approach is effective and a deterent to misconduct. Students with more serious suspension records do not feel that it is effective. Further, both teachers and students regarded in-school suspension as an appropriate penalty, although students still preferred out-of-school suspension because it gives them a day off. It should be noted, however, that neither type of suspension seems to carry a stigma for students, and most are not embarrassed about being suspended, nor do they report any tendency of their peers to ridicule them.

Recidivism

Although both types of suspension tend to discourage recidivism, students whose first suspension was in school were more likely to be suspended again than those whose first suspension was out of school, regardless of the severity of the offenses. Two reasons are offered to explain this finding. First, out-of-school suspension occurs with less delay and may provide a more immediate punishment. Second, contacts with parents and parental involvement are greater when students are suspended out of school. The data suggest that negative parental reaction is one of the strongest factors deterring students from engaging in behaviors leading to suspension.

Educational Disruption

Consistent with the stated goals of the program, in-school suspension provided for greater educational continuity than out-of-school suspension. A greater proportion of students completed school assignments in the in-school setting (43 percent versus 23 percent). And, as indicated previously, removal from the regular classroom was for a shorter duration. However, it is clear that there is still room for improvement.

Protection of Due Process Rights

In general, the level of protection of due process rights is fairly high both for students suspended in school and for those suspended out of school. However, there is a tendency for parents of students suspended in school to be contacted less frequently than those suspended out of school. The area of parental contact should be closely watched both because of legal requirements and because involvement of the parent seems to have an important deterrent role in the suspension process.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this preliminary evaluation suggest that in-school suspension is a viable disciplinary alternative to out-of-school suspension. It is endorsed by staff in schools using it who feel it is appropriate and effective for less serious offenses. For students who have never been suspended or have been suspended only once, it also appears to have the potential of deterring misconduct, as it is perceived as more of a punishment than out-of-school suspension. For chronic offenders, however, neither type of suspension may be effective in changing behavior.

The findings suggest that improvements could be made in the program and that certain aspects of it should be carefully monitored. Two critical areas in which additional effort is needed are in the educational and parental contact components. First, more emphasis needs to be placed on assuring that students get and complete their class assignments while suspended. To the extent possible, this should be done so that the burden on teachers is minimized but at the same suspension is not delayed any longer than necessary. Second, greater efforts should be made to involve parents when students are given in-school suspension. While due process rights are protected and parents are generally notified regardless of the type of suspension, there is a tendency for parental contacts to be less when a student is suspended in school. Given the fact that students see parental reaction as an important negative aspect of suspension, parental involvement should be maximized.

Finally, the increased rate of suspension, the apparent discrepancy in type of suspension by race, and the trend toward greater recidivism after in-school than after out-of-school suspension should be monitored closely. It is clearly too soon to say that these are a result of the program or some aspect of its implementation. They do, however, suggest possible problems with the program and should be addressed if they are found to persist.

A PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF THE PILOT IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION PROGRAM, 1980-81

By

William L. Stallworth
Joy A. Frechtling
Steven M. Frankel

Division of Instructional Evaluation and Testing
Joy A. Frechtling, Director

Department of Educational Accountability
Steven M. Frankel, Director

PROJECT STAFF

Study Director:	William L. Stallworth
Statistical Consultants:	John Larson Joseph Hawkins
Data Collector:	Bobbie Strigel
Secretarial Staff:	Patricia Chambers

The assistance of principals of participating schools and in-school suspension program staff is gratefully acknowledged.

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A PRELIMINARY EVALUATION OF THE PILOT IN-SCHOOL SUSPENSION PROGRAM 1980-81

INTRODUCTION

A pilot in-school suspension program was inaugurated at Ridgeview Junior High School and Montgomery Blair Senior High School in the 1980-81 school year. The goal of the program was to provide a practical alternative to out-of-school suspension for less serious infractions[1], by removing disruptive students from the classroom while providing a continuing educational program and an opportunity to change inappropriate behavior. The present study was undertaken to gather some preliminary information on the program, how it is working, and the ways in which it might be improved in the future.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

The specific features of the in-school suspension programs in the two pilot schools were as follows. Students were assigned to in-school suspension by administrative referral. The disciplinary offenses which resulted in an in-school suspension were: 1) Smoking; 2) Cutting Class; 3) Vandalism; 4) Chronic Tardiness; 5) Refusal To Cooperate; 6) Disrespect/Insubordination; 7) Classroom Disruption; 8) Truancy; 9) Fighting; and 10) Cheating. School administrators retained the final authority to determine which offenses warranted in-school suspension and which warranted an alternative. Each suspension was documented by completion of MCPS Form 560-6, "Report of Suspension."

Students assigned to the in-school suspension program were isolated from the rest of the student body and placed under the supervision of a paraprofessional for the length of their suspension, which generally ranged from one to three days. At Blair High School, two staff members supervised the in-school suspension program at different times during the day. Each worked half-time in the program and half-time at other school duties. One is an Industrial Arts teacher and the other is a teacher's aide. At Ridgeview one paraprofessional supervised the program on a full-time basis. All of the program staff members have their Bachelor's Degree. At Blair, a specific room was reserved for the in-school suspension program. At Ridgeview, no central holding room was available; and students assigned to the in-school suspension program were periodically relocated from room to room among the three rooms that were available on a temporary basis.

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[1]Specifically, for (1) Class Cutting; (2) Chronic Tardiness; (3) Truancy; (4) Insubordination; (5) Breaking School Rules; (6) Vandalism; (7) Smoking; (8) Inappropriate Behavior/Language; (9) Classroom Disruption; and (10) Minor Fights (Scuffling). Superintendent's memorandum to Members of the Board of Education, September 22, 1980 (Information 11.6). Subject: In-School Suspension Program. (See Appendix B.)

Both of the pilot schools limited the number of students participating in the in-school supension program at any one time in order to facilitate individual counseling and to provide an opportunity for students to develop a commitment to improve their behavior. At Blair, a limit of five students was set; and at Ridgeview, a limit of three students was set. According to the program staff of these schools, the optimal number of students participating in the in-school suspension program at one time is three or less. On a typical day, approximately two students were serving in-school suspensions at Ridgeview and Blair. However, the number of students assigned to in-school suspension at Blair varied quite a bit. According to program staff, some weeks there were three or four students in the program everyday, and other weeks only one or two students were in the program daily.

Class assignments were obtained prior to the implementation of the in-school suspension, and very few of the students served their in-school suspensions without the appropriate academic materials being made available to them. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of the students surveyed said they had their assignments during their in-school suspension. Most (76%) of the teachers surveyed reported that the assignments they prepared for students in the program were the same as their regular classroom assignments. Eight percent said their assignments were more intensive and 16 percent said less intensive.

At Blair, the program staff assumed the primary responsibility for collecting assignments for students in the program. At Ridgeview, this responsibility was given to the students. In addition, at Ridgeview, students who obtained their assignments prior to serving their suspension were rewarded with permission to leave school five minutes before the rest of the school. Students cherished this extra five minutes and tended to obtain their assignments before serving their suspensions. At both schools, program staff were available to assist students with their assignments and to answer their questions. Most students did not require an intense amount of assistance with their assignments, but they usually had a question or two during the day. Although dictionaries and certain other materials were available, the in-school suspension rooms were generally not as well equipped with study aids as the regular classrooms.

Counseling was typically individualized, although group counseling was occasionally used when the program staff perceived that students had common problems, common reasons for referral, or other characteristics in common. Counseling generally centered around the reason for referral, behavioral expectations, and how to cope and deal tactfully with situations that arise at school.

A variety of restrictions were placed on students assigned to the in-school suspension program. Aside from their detention in an isolated room all day where they were expected to work on their assignments, students in the program were prohibited from talking to each other; prohibited from participating in extracurricular activities for the duration of their suspension; and given separate lunch periods from the rest of the school. At Ridgeview, students assigned to in-school suspension had their lunch in the cafeteria prior to the first regular lunch period. At Blair, students bought their lunches during the fifteen minute break between regular lunch periods and returned to the suspension room to eat them.

Follow-up was not a regular feature of the in-school suspension program at either school. To the extent that it did occur, follow-up was informal and tended to focus on students the program staff encountered in the hallways between classes and those who had more severe problems. However, opportunities for follow-up were limited because program staff had students nearly every day all day.

METHODOLOGY

Case studies were conducted to obtain information on the programs and their effects. Assistant principals and program staff were interviewed. Teacher surveys were conducted to obtain information on the attitudes of teachers toward the suspension program. Students who had been suspended in school and those who had been suspended out of school were surveyed separately in small groups. In addition, student surveys were administered to two randomly selected classes at each school in order to obtain information about the general student body's familiarity with and attitudes toward the in-school suspension program.[2]

To obtain record data on the number of students actually involved in both types of suspension programs (in-school and out-of-school), assignment rates, recidivism rates, reasons for assignment, and length of assignment, information was gathered from MCPS Suspension Report Form 560-6, keypunched and computerized after in-school suspensions were distinguished from out-of-school suspensions.

For comparative purposes, case studies were also conducted at two nonpilot schools which offer variants of in-school suspension. These data are presented, where relevant, to indicate the effects of having a formal, supported program, as opposed to an informal one.

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[2]Altogether, 135 teachers were surveyed at the two pilot schools. They represent 83% of the total teaching staff of these two schools. The 86 students to whom we administered the out-of-school suspension survey represent 58% of the total number of students given out-of-school suspension during the period covered by the evaluation. (September 1, 1980 through April 3, 1981). The 146 students to whom we administered the in-school suspension survey represent 50% of the total number of students given in school suspensions during the seven month period covered by the evaluation. The random survey included a total of 95 students in the two pilot schools. Students surveyed in the random sample who had been suspended either in-school or out were dropped from the study, (N = 12). The random sample therefore reflects the attitudes of students who have never been suspended from school.

FINDINGS

PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

The study looked at implementation of the program in the pilot schools in order to determine whether or not the schools were in fact using the in-school suspension alternative. In addition, data were gathered to determine whether or not the program was being implemented as intended by the superintendent and the planning group.

School Suspension Practices

The data show that the schools were, in fact, implementing the in-school suspension program and taking advantage of the opportunity to try out this new approach. During the period covered by the evaluation,[3] overall, 69 percent of the students suspended from the two pilot schools were assigned to in-school suspension at least once.

By contrast, in two other county schools which offer a variant of in-school suspensions, only 16 percent of the students suspended during the same period were assigned to in-school suspension. It appears that the additional resources available in the pilot schools (e.g., suspension program staff) made a big difference in the level of implementation of the in-school suspension program.

Table 1 provides descriptive data on students assigned to these programs. When the data were analyzed by minority versus majority status[4] of students suspended, a statistically significant difference ($Z=2.32$ - $p < .05$) in assignment rates was found, with minority students being less frequently assigned to the in-school alternative. (The trend was similar in both of the pilot schools studied.) Inspection of the data suggests that this discrepancy is not explained by differences in the severity of offenses or differences in the recidivism rates of these groups. (See Tables A-1 and A-2 in the Appendix.)

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[3]September 1, 1980 through April 3, 1981

[4]All of the majority students are white, and 80% of the minority students are black. Together, whits and black students constitute 93% of the students suspended from the pilot schools.

Table 1

Percentage of Students Suspended Who Were Assigned to In-School Suspension, by Sex and Majority/Minority Status

	Blair High		Ridgeview Jr.		Both Schools Combined		
	White	Nonwhite	White	Nonwhite	White	Nonwhite	Total
FEMALE	44.0	52.0	82.0	57.0	73.0	55.0	67.0
MALE	80.0	64.0	70.0	60.0	74.0	63.0	70.0
TOTAL	70.0	61.0	75.0	61.0	74.0	61.0	69.0

In addition, comparison of overall suspension rates for 1979-80 and 1980-81 show that, in contrast to a stable county trend, suspension rates increased in the schools with the pilot programs and exceeded the county average. See Table 2 below. This suggests that the availability of the in-school alternative may increase the likelihood of using suspension as a tool for disciplinary action.

Table 2

Comparison of Pilot School Suspension Rates and Countywide Suspension Rates

	Pilot Schools		MCPS Total	
	Number of Suspensions	Percent of Enrollment	Number of Suspensions	Percent of Enrollment
1979-1980	268	9.3%	3481	6.5%
1980-1981	383	13.8%	3428	6.6%

Reasons for Assignment to In-School Suspension

The data show that students tended to be suspended in school for less serious offenses and out of school for more severe offenses. In addition, students suspended in school were generally suspended for shorter periods of time than those suspended out of school, and almost always for one to three days only. Thus, administrators are adhering to the superintendent's guidelines concerning the use of in-school suspensions.

Table 3 presents the data on suspension rates by type of infraction. It appears that school administrators did tend to use in-school suspension for less serious infractions[5] and out-of-school suspensions for more severe infractions[6] as intended, at least with respect to first time offenders.

Table 3

Percentage of Students Who Committed Various First Offenses, by Type of Suspension

First Offense	Suspended In-School	Suspended Out-of-School	Total
Tardiness	100.0	0.0	N=7
Cutting	60.0	40.0	N=20
Truancy	100.0	0.0	N=33
Refusal To Cooperate with School Rules*	85.0	15.0	N=40
Disrespect/Insubordination	68.4	31.6	N=38
Class Disruption	83.3	16.7	N=12
Smoking	100.0	0.0	N=10
Vandalism	75.0	25.0	N=4
Fighting	44.8	55.2	N=67
Serious Offenses	23.0	77.0	N=61
	N=179	N=113	N=292

*Includes the category "cheating"

[5]Unfortunately, the MCPS reporting system (MCPS Form 560-6, "Monthly Suspension Report") does not record suspensions in exactly the same fashion as they are identified in the superintendent's memorandum to the Board of Education. Consequently, Table 2, which is based on the data currently available in the MCPS reporting system, does not reflect exactly the offense categories which the superintendent indentified as properly assigned to in-school suspension.

[6]In Table 2, the category which is labelled "Serious Offenses" includes (1) Theft; (2) Threatening Students; (3) Threatening Staff; (4) Extortion; (5) Attacking Staff; (6) Sex Activity/Indecent Exposure; (7) Alcohol; (8) Drugs; (9) Inciting/Participating in Disturbances; (10) False Alarms; (11) Weapons; and (12) Arson.

For example, all (100 percent) of the first offenders suspended for chronic tardiness were assigned to in-school suspension. Similarly, all of the first offenders suspended for truancy or smoking were assigned to in-school suspension; and most (85 percent) of those suspended for refusal to cooperate, or classroom disruption (83 percent), or vandalism (75 percent) were also assigned to in-school suspension. Indeed, with the exception of fighting[7], in each of the categories of less serious offenses the majority of first-time offenders were assigned to in-school suspension. By contrast, most (77 percent) of the first-time offenders suspended for "Serious Offenses" were suspended out of school. These trends are statistically significant (Chi Square = 75, $p < .05$). A similiar pattern is found for students suspended twice or more than twice. In general, the data show that students tend to be suspended in school for less serious infractions and out of school for more serious infractions.

Table 4 shows that first-time offenders suspended in school were generally suspended for shorter periods of time than those suspended out of school. Most (78 percent) of the first-time offenders suspended in school were suspended for one day, and virtually none of them were assigned for more than three days. A similar pattern is found for students suspended twice or more than twice. These trends are statistically significant. (Chi Square $\geq$ 10.8. $p \leq .05$).

Table 4

Number of Days Suspended For First Offense,
By Type of Suspension

Number of Days Suspended	In-School	Out-of-School	Total
One	78.2%	47.8%	66.4%
Two	12.8%	15.0%	13.7%
Three	7.3%	21.2%	12.7%
Four	0.0%	1.8%	0.7
Five	1.7%	14.2%	6.5%
	N=179	N=113	N=292

[7]The category "Fighting" is problematic because minor scuffles are not distinguished from serious fights. Consequently, some of the students suspended out of school for fighting may actually belong in category number 10, "Serious Offenses." If so, the proportion of students suspended out of school for fighting may be overstated and the proportion of students suspended out of school for serious offenses may be understated.

PROGRAM IMPACT

Program impact was measured in three different ways. First, students and teachers were asked whether they thought in-school suspension was an effective deterrent to less serious forms of student misconduct, and, if so, whether they thought it was appropriate and more effective than out-of-school suspension. Second, recidivism rates for students initially suspended in or out of school were compared. Third, the educational disruption resulting from suspension was examined.

Perceived Effectiveness

The data show that the respondents generally thought that in-school suspension is an effective deterrent to most of the less serious forms of student misconduct; however, the support was far from overwhelming, and there were differences between teachers and students and between types of students regarding perceived effectiveness of in-school suspension. Most of the respondents thought in-school suspension was an appropriate penalty for less serious infractions, but the student respondents still tended to prefer out-of-school suspension because it gives them a day off. Most of the respondents thought that in-school suspension was a more effective deterrent than out-of-school suspension.

The percentages on the right hand side of Table 5 below show that most of the respondents thought that in-school suspension is an effective deterrent to most (7 out of 10) of the less serious infractions including class cutting, chronic tardiness, insubordination, inappropriate language/behavior, breaking school rules, classroom disruption, and scuffling (minor fights).[8]

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[8]Not surprisingly, students who were assigned to in-school suspension more than once were less likely than those assigned only once to say that it was a deterrent to these infractions. (See Table A-3 in the Appendix.)

Table 5

Percentage of Respondents Who Said In-School Suspension Is An Effective Deterrent To Various Student Offenses, by Category of Respondent

	Teachers	Never Suspended	Suspended In-School Only	Suspended Both In & Out of School*	Total
All Below	42.9	3.6	13.3	11.9	21.4
None	3.2	6.0	17.3	25.4	11.1
Smoking	59.5	43.4	32.0	32.8	44.7
Cutting Class	73.0	57.8	60.0	41.8	60.7
Vandalism	47.6	53.0	50.7	34.3	47.0
Chronic Tardiness	78.6	57.8	46.7	38.8	59.3
Insubordination	69.0	45.8	48.0	41.8	53.8
Inappropriate Behavior/Language	80.2	39.8	41.3	34.3	53.6
Breaking School Rules	68.3	50.6	52.0	49.3	57.0
Classroom Disruption	81.7	48.2	52.0	41.8	59.8
Truancy	57.9	50.6	44.0	37.3	49.3
Scuffles (Minor Fights)	65.1	42.2	49.3	49.3	53.3
	N=135	N=83	N=76	N=70	N=364

*This category is comprised of only students who received the in-school suspension survey. These students reported that they had also been suspended out of school.

Further, most of the respondents (56 percent) thought that in-school suspension is more effective than out-of-school suspension, although students who have been suspended both in school and out did not. (See Table 6.)

Table 6

Percentage of Respondents Who Said That In-School Suspension Was More Effective Than Out-Of-School Suspension, by Category Of Respondent*

More Effective	Teachers	Never Suspended	Suspended In-School Only	Suspended Both In & Out of School	Total
No	39.7	43.6	39.7	60.4	44.0
Yes	60.3	56.4	60.3	39.6	56.0
	N=131	N=78	N=63	N=53	N=325

*Respondents who thought that in-school suspension did not deter any of the offenses listed in Table 5 were not asked this question. Consequently, the numbers of respondents in Tables 5 and 6 are different.

However, there were differences between teachers and students and between types of students with respect to perceived effectiveness of in-school suspension. (See Table 5 above.) For example, although 73 percent of the teachers thought that in-school suspension deters class cutting, only 58 percent of the students who have never been suspended, 60 percent of those suspended in-school, and 42 percent of those who have been suspended both in school and out agreed with this conclusion.

Similarly, most of the respondents (67 percent) thought that in-school suspension is an appropriate punishment, although teachers and students who have never been suspended were more likely to think so than students who have been suspended. (See Table 7.)

Table 7

Percentage of Respondents Who Said That In-School Suspension Is An Appropriate Penalty for Less Serious Offenses, by Category Of Respondent

Appropriate	Teachers	Never Suspended	Suspended In-School Only	Suspended Both In & Out of School*	Total
No	24.4	29.5	46.0	45.3	33.2
Yes	75.6	70.5	54.0	54.7	66.8
	N=131	N=78	N=63	N=53	N=325

*This category is comprised only of students who received the in-school suspension survey. These students reported that they had also been suspended out-of-school.

Even though most of the student respondents said that in-school suspension is a fair punishment, most of those who have been suspended (68 percent) still prefer out-of-school suspension. In contrast, students who have never been suspended were fairly evenly divided on this issue. (See Table 8.)

Table 8

Percentage of Students Who Prefer In-School Versus Out-Of-School Suspension, by Type Of Suspension

Preference	Never Suspended	Suspended In-School Only	Suspended Out-of-School Only	Suspended Both In & Out of School*	Total
Prefer Out	49.4	59.2	73.7	72.0	63.2
Prefer In	50.6	40.8	26.3	28.0	36.8
	N=83	N=76	N=38	N=118	N=315

*This category includes <u>both</u> those students who received the in-school suspension survey and those students who received the out-of-school suspension survey. In both cases, the students told us that they had experienced <u>both</u> types of suspension.

Further, Table 9 suggests that one of the reasons students prefer out-of-school suspension may be because they regard in-school suspension as more punishment than out-of-school suspension.

Table 9

Percentage of Students Who Said In-School Suspension Is More Punishment Than Out-of-School Suspension, by Type of Suspension*

	Never Suspended	Suspended In-School Only	Suspended Out-of-School Only	Suspended Both In & Out of School	Total
More Punishment					
No	19.5	37.8	32.1	38.8	33.7
Yes	80.5	62.2	67.9	61.2	66.3
	N=41	N=45	N=28	N=85	N=199

*Respondents who preferred in-school suspension were not asked this question. In addition, not all of the students who had experienced both types of suspension were asked this question (only those who received the in-school suspension survey). Consequently, the number of respondents in Tables 8 and 9 are different.

This tendency of students to view in-school suspension as more punitive than out-of-school suspension is not the result of ostracism by their peers, because there is no statistically significant difference between students suspended in-school and those suspended out-of-school with respect to the tendency of their friends to ridicule them for being suspended. In both cases, the overwhelming majority of students said that their friends did not make fun of them. (See Table 10.)

Table 10

Percentage of Students Who Said That Their Friends Made Fun of Them When They Were Suspended, by Type of Suspension

	Suspended In-School Only	Suspended Out-of-School Only	Suspended Both In and Out of School*	Total
Make Fun				
No	81.6	92.1	89.8	87.5
Yes	18.4	7.9	10.2	12.5
	N=76	N=38	N=118	N=232

*This category includes <u>both</u> those students who received the in-school suspension survey and students who received the out-of-school suspension survey. In both cases, the students told us that they had experienced <u>both</u> types of suspension.

Not surprisingly, therefore, most of the students said that they did not (nor would not) feel embarrassed about being suspended. (See Table 11.)[9]

Table 11

Percentage of Students Who Said They Were Embarrassed About Being Suspended, by Type of Suspension

	Never Suspended	Suspended In-School Only	Suspended Out-of-School Only	Both In and Out	Total
Embarrassed					
No	57.8	80.3	60.5	83.1	73.0
Yes	42.2	19.7	39.5	16.9	27.0
	N=83	N=76	N=38	N=118	N=315

[9]Indeed, when the data were analyzed by number of suspensions, a statistically significant (Chi Square = 16.4 $p < .05$) trend was displayed: the more often that students were suspended, the less embarrassed they felt about being suspended. (See Table A-4 in the Appendix.)

The data show that the most common feature of out-of-school suspension is that students liked the day off. (See Table A-5 in the Appendix.) Consequently, in-school suspension may be regarded as more severe punishment than out-of-school suspension because it denies students a day off. However, this is the feature of in-school suspension that teachers liked most, (51 percent). (See Table A-6 in the Appendix.)

Recidivism Rates

The data show that the tendency to avoid a second suspension was significantly greater when the first suspension was out of school rather than in school. Table 12 presents data that address the question of whether or not there appears to be a relationship between type of first suspension and the tendency to be suspended more than once. The data show that the majority of the students in both groups were not suspended again during the period covered by the evaluation.[10] In the group of students initially suspended out of school, 68 percent were never suspended again; in the group initially suspended in school 56.0 percent were never suspended again. However, the tendency to avoid a second suspension was significantly greater when the first suspension was out of school. ($Z=2.00$, $p = .05$) Further, recidivism was not related to the seriousness of the initial offense.

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[10]The students in Table 12 represent those who were suspended early enough in the academic year to have had a chance to incur a second suspension if they were likely to do so. In this regard, Table 12 represents only students who were suspended at least one month before the evaluation ended on April 3, 1981.

Table 12

Percentage of Students Suspended Once, Twice, Three or More Times, by Type of First Suspension (In-School vs. Out-of-School)*

Total Number of Suspensions	Suspended In-School	Suspended Out-of-School
One	56.3	68.3
Two	20.8	18.8
Three or More	22.9	12.9

*Only students who were suspended at least one month before the evaluation ended are shown in Table 12.

Two reasons can be offered to explain this finding. First, the data show that out-of-school suspension is enacted more immediately than in-school suspension. (See Table 13.) Students suspended in school must collect their assignments before serving their suspension, and this usually means that they do not begin their suspension until the day after their misconduct. Further, students sometimes must wait until there is space available in the in-school suspension room before beginning their suspension period. By contrast, students who are suspended out of school are generally punished immediately, that is, the same day. Table 13 shows that 48 percent of the students who were given out-of-school suspensions said that they were suspended on the same day that their misconduct occurred. By contrast, only 15 percent of the students who were suspended in school began receiving their suspension the same day that they committed the offense.

Table 13

Percentage of Students Indicating Various Timelags Between Offense and Suspension, by Type of Suspension

Timelag	Suspended In-School Only	Suspended Out-of-School Only	Suspended Both In and Out of School*	Total
Less Than 1 Day	14.5	47.4	28.8	27.2
One Day	42.1	23.7	24.6	30.2
Two Days	17.1	13.2	19.5	17.7
Three Days	7.9	5.3	11.0	9.1
Four Days	7.9	2.6	5.9	6.0
Five Days	0.0	2.6	4.2	2.6
More Than Five Days	10.5	5.3	5.9	7.3
	N=76	N=38	N=118	N=232

*This category includes both those students who received the in-school suspension survey and those students who received the out-of-school suspension survey. In both cases, the students told us that they had experienced both types of suspension.

A second reason that out-of-school suspension may lead to less recidivism is that parents are more involved when a student is removed from the school. Table 14 shows that there is a tendency for there to be more contact between the school and parents when out-of-school rather than in-school suspension occurs: 17 percent of the out-of-school suspensions involved parent conferences held in school as compared to only 7.7 percent of the in-school suspensions.

Table 14

Percentage of Students Reporting Alternative Methods for Parent Notification, by Type of Suspension*

	Suspended In-School Only	Suspended Out-of-School Only	Suspended Both In and Out of School	Total
How Were Your Parents Notified?				
Letter	55.8	27.6	50.0	47.7
Call	80.8	100.0	81.1	84.5
Both	40.4	27.6	39.2	37.4
Conference	7.7	17.2	9.5	10.3
Other	1.9	0.0	2.7	1.9
Don't Know	1.9	0.0	6.8	3.9
	N=52	N=29	N=74	N=155

*Only those students who said that their parents were notified prior to their suspension were asked this question.

The results of the student survey also suggest that parents get more involved when their child is suspended out of school rather than in school. For example, while parental disapproval/punishment is the single most common aspect of their suspensions disliked by students suspended out of school, none of the students suspended in school even mentioned that parental disapproval/punishment was a result of their suspension. (See Tables A-7 and A-8 in the Appendix.)

Educational Disruption

Although out-of-school suspension may have a greater impact with respect to recidivism, the data suggest that in-school suspension provides for greater educational continuity. Data already presented support this contention, as students receiving in-school suspension were removed from the regular classroom for shorter periods of time. In addition, Table 15 shows that according to student reports,[11] those suspended in school were significantly more likely ($Z=2.02$., $p < .05$) to complete their assignments during their suspension than those given out-of-school suspensions.

Table 15

Percentage of Students Who Completed Their Assignments During Suspension, by Type of Suspension

	Suspended In-School Only	Suspended Out-of-School Only	Suspended Both In and Out of School*	Total
Assignments Completed				
No	56.6	76.3	67.8	65.5
Yes	43.4	23.7	32.2	34.5
	N=76	N=38	N=118	N=232

*This category includes both those students who received the in-school suspension survey and those students who received the out-of-school suspension survey. In both cases, the students told us that they had experienced both types of suspension.

[11]Data from the teacher survey closely verify these figures regarding completion of assignments by students suspended in school and will not be repeated here.

Overall, only about 24 percent of the students who were suspended out of school completed their assignments, as compared to about 43 percent of those who were suspended in school. Nonetheless it should be pointed out that less than half of the students in the in-school suspension program completed their assignments during their in-school suspension, although virtually all of them (87 percent) had their assignments. Further, the fact that less than half of the students assigned to in-school suspension completed their assignments may be one reason that a sizable minority of the pilot teachers (16 percent) said that preparing assignments for students suspended in school was burdensome and not worthwhile.[12] Thus, at least with respect to the completion of assignments, the in-school suspension program can be improved.

PROTECTION OF DUE PROCESS RIGHTS

In general, there was no significant difference between students suspended in school and those suspended out of school with respect to the protection of due process rights. Table 16 shows that virtually all of the students who were suspended in school or out of school were notified prior to suspension of the reason they were being suspended. The majority of them were also given an opportunity to present their side of the facts leading up to their administrative referral (see Table 17); and in the majority of cases, their parents were notified of their pending suspension before it took place. (See Table 18.) However, there is a tendency for parents of students suspended in school to be notified less frequently than those of students suspended out of school. Given the fact that there is generally less parental involvement in in-school than in out-of-school suspensions, the area of parental contact must be closely watched.

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[12]Forty-six percent (46%) of the teachers surveyed said preparing assignments for students assigned to in-school suspension was burdensome but worthwhile, 38% said that it was worthwhile and not burdensome; and 16% said that it was burdensome and not worthwhile. (See Table A-10 in the Appendix.)

Table 16

Percentage of Students Who Were Notified Prior to Suspension, of the Reason for Their Suspension, By Type of Suspension

	Suspended In-School Only	Suspended Out-of-School Only	Suspended Both In and Out of School*	Total
Told Why				
No	5.3	0.0	7.6	5.6
Yes	94.7	100.0	92.4	94.4
	N=76	N=38	N=118	N=232

*This category includes both those students who received the in-school suspension survey and those students who received the out-of-school suspension survey. In both cases, the students told us that they had experienced both types of suspension.

Table 17

Percentage of Students Who Said They Were Given an Opportunity to Present Their Side of the Story Prior to Suspension, by Type of Suspension

	Suspended In-School Only	Suspended Out-of-School Only	Suspended Both In and Out of School*	Total
Your Side				
No	23.7	15.8	33.9	27.6
Yes	76.3	84.2	66.1	72.4
	N=76	N=38	N=118	N=232

*This category includes both those students who received the in-school suspension survey and those students who received the out-of-school suspension survey. In both cases, the students told us that they had experienced both types of suspension.

Table 18

Percentage of Students Who Said Their Parents Were Notified of Their Pending Suspension Prior to Suspension*

	Suspended In-School Only	Suspended Out-of-School Only	Suspended Both In and Out of School	Total
Parents Told				
No	31.6	23.7	37.3	33.2
Yes	68.4	76.3	62.7	66.8
	N=76	N=38	N=118	N=232

*A "No" response does not necessarily mean that parents were never notified; it means that they were not contacted before the suspension took place.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings of this preliminary evaluation suggest that in-school suspension is a viable disciplinary alternative to out-of-school suspension. It is endorsed by staff in those schools using it who feel it is appropriate and effective for less serious offenses. For students who have never been suspended or who have been suspended only once, it also appears to have the potential of deterring misconduct, as it is perceived as more of a punishment than out-of-school suspension. For chronic offenders, however, neither type of suspension may be effective in changing behavior.

The findings suggest, however, that improvements could be made in the program and that certain aspects of it should be carefully monitored. Two critical areas in which additional effort is needed are in the educational and parental contact components. First, more emphasis needs to be placed on assuring that students get and complete their class assignments while suspended. To the extent possible, this should be done so that the burden on teachers is minimized but that suspension is not delayed any longer than necessary. Second, greater efforts should be made to involve parents when students are given in-school suspension. While due process rights are protected and parents are generally notified regardless of the type of suspension, there is a tendency for parental contacts to be less when a student is suspended in-school. Given the fact that students see parental reaction as an important negative aspect of suspension, parental involvement should be maximized.

Finally, the increased rate of suspension, the apparent discrepancy in type of suspension by race, and a trend toward greater recidivism after in-school than after out-of-school suspension should be monitored closely. It is clearly too soon to say that these are a result of the program or some aspect of its implementation. They do, however, suggest possible problems with the program and should be so addressed if they are found to persist.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Supplementary Tables

Table A-1

Percentage of Students Who Received One, Two, Three or More Suspensions, by Majority/Minority Status

	Majority	Minority	Total
One Suspension	65.7	64.9	65.4
Two Suspensions	18.2	19.8	18.8
Three or More Suspensions	16.0	15.3	15.8
	N=181	N=111	N=292

Chi Square = .12207. $p > .05$.

Table A-1 shows that there is no statistically significant difference between majority and minority students with respect to the number of times they were suspended.

Table A-2

Percentage of Offenses Which Were Either Less Serious or More Serious, by Majority/Minority Status

	Majority	Minority	Total
Less Serious	82.7	75.6	80.2
More Serious	17.3	24.4	19.8
	N=307	N=172	N=479

$Z = 1.78$, $p > .05$
Percents and totals based on offenses

*In Table A-2 the category "Less Serious" includes: (1) Class Cutting; (2) Chronic Tardiness; (3) Truancy; (4) Insubordination/Disrespect; (5) Refusal to Cooperate; (6) Vandalism; (7) Smoking; (8) Classroom Disruption; (9) Fighting; and (10) Cheating. The category "More Serious" includes (1) Theft; (2) Threatening Students; (3) Threatening Staff; (4) Extortion; (5) Attacking Staff; (6) Sex Activity/Indecent Exposure; (7) Alcohol; (8) Drugs; (9) Inciting/Participating in Disturbances; (10) False Alarms; (11) Weapons; and (12) Arson. Table A-2 shows that there is no statistically significant difference between majority and minority students with respect to the tendency to commit serious offenses.

Table A-3

Percentage of Respondents Who Said In-School Suspension Is An Effective Deterrent to Various Student Offenses, by Category of Respondent

	Teachers	Never Suspended	One In-School Suspension	More Than One In-School Suspension	Total
All Below	42.9	3.6	13.5	13.0	23.6
None	3.2	6.0	13.5	26.1	7.7
Smoking	59.5	43.4	34.6	26.1	47.5
Class Cutting	73.0	57.8	61.5	56.5	65.1
Vandalism	47.6	53.0	57.7	34.8	50.0
Chronic Tardiness	78.6	57.8	48.1	43.5	64.1
Insubordination	69.0	45.8	48.1	47.8	56.7
Inappropriate Language/Behavior	80.2	39.8	42.3	39.1	58.1
Breaking Rules	68.3	50.6	57.7	39.1	58.8
Classroom Disruption	81.7	48.2	55.8	43.5	64.1
Truancy	57.9	50.6	46.2	39.1	52.1
Scuffles (Minor Fights)	65.1	42.2	55.8	34.8	54.2
	N=135	N=83	N=53	N=23	N=294

Table A-4

Percentage of Students Who Said They Were Embarrassed About Being Suspended, by Number of Suspension

	Never Suspended	One Suspension	More Than One Suspension	Total
Embarrassed				
No	57.8	71.3	82.2	73.0
Yes	42.2	28.8	17.8	27.0
	N=83	N=80	N=152	N=315

Chi Square = 16.4. $p < .05$.

Table A-5

Percentage of Students Who Liked Various Features of Out-of-School Suspension*

Having Day Off	53.1
Doing Classwork at My Own Pace	5.0
Nothing	37.0
Other	4.9
Total	100.0
	N=81

*This question was asked of students suspended out of school.

Table A-6

Percentage of Teachers Who Liked Various Features of the In-School Suspension Program*

No Day Off	50.9
It's Effective	35.7
Assignments	7.1
Removes Disruptive Students from Classroom	5.4
Dislike Program	0.9
Other	0.0
Total	100.0
	N=112

*Some teachers did not respond to this question. Thus, the number of respondents in Table A-6 may be different from the number in other tables in this report.

Table A-7

Percentage of Students Who Disliked Various Features of Out-Of-School Suspension*

Parental Disapproval/Punishment	34.3
Missed My Friends	14.3
Missed Classwork	15.7
Went on My Record	11.4
Unfairly Suspended	4.3
Other	20.0
Total	100.0
	N=70

*This question was asked of students suspended out-of-school.

Table A-8

Percentage of Students Who Disliked Various Features of the In-School Suspension Program*

Being In The Room All Day	20.9
Can't Talk	10.4
Boring	23.9
Missed My Friends	6.0
Facilities	3.0
Everything	19.4
Other	16.4
Total	100.0
	N=134

*This question was asked of students suspended in-school.

Table A-9

Percentage of Teachers Who Think That Various Features of the In-School Suspension Program Need Improvement*

Earlier Notification of Students Assigned to the Program	19.8
More Feedback/Follow-up	14.8
Closer Supervision of Students Assigned to the Program	11.1
Better Facilities	9.9
So Far So Good	13.6
Other	30.8
Total	100.0
	N=81

*Some teachers did not respond to this question. Thus, the number of respondents in Table A-9 may be different from the number in other tables in this report.

Table A-10

Percentage of Teachers Who Think That Preparing Assignments For Students Assigned to In-School Suspension Is Either Burdensome or Worthwhile*

Burdensome and Not Worthwhile	16.5
Burdensome But Worthwhile	45.9
Worthwhile	37.6
Total	100.0
	N=109

*Only teachers who said that they had prepared assignments for students suspended in school were asked this question.

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APPENDIX B

Office of the Superintendent of Schools 11.6
MONTGOMERY COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS
Rockville, Maryland

September 22, 1980

MEMORANDUM

To: Members of the Board of Education

From: Edward Andrews, Superintendent of Schools

Subject: In-School Suspension Program

A pilot In-School Suspension Program has been inaugurated at Ridgeview Junior High School and Montgomery Blair Senior High School for this 1980-81 school year. Each school has been allocated one teacher assistant position. The teacher assistant will implement the program goals which are to:

- Provide an alternative to out-of-school suspension
- Provide an appropriate consequence for less serious disciplinary offenses
- Provide a consequence which does not remove the student from the educational setting
- Provide an opprotunity for a student to change his/her inappropriate behavior
- Develop a commitment to improve behavior by involving both parents and students
- Provide in-service activities to staff who will be responsible for maintaining and directing the in-school suspension program
- Provide a continuing educational program for the time the students are not attending class

PROCESS

Parents and students will be made aware of the operation of the in-school suspension program in the same manner as they are made aware of the local school discipline policy. When practical, a parent conference will take place prior to the implementation of an in-school suspension. An in-service program will be made available to the total school staff on accepted procedures for the use of the in-school suspension program. Schools will also explore community outreach programs for possible assistance in supplementing the counseling component of the in-school suspension program.

Students can only be assigned to in-school suspension by administrative referral. Schools will limit the number of students participating in the program at any one time so that positive behavioral changes can be stressed. The amount of time that the student is assigned to the in-school suspension program will be determined at the outset of the suspension process by the administration.

Work and academic tasks, will be assigned commensurate with the guidelines provided in the Student's Rights and Responsibilities Handbook. In-school suspension staff and school counselors will work hand-in-hand with the students referred to the program. The counseling will be geared toward aiding students in approaching appropriate behavior patterns. When in-school suspension does not promote the desired behavioral changes on the part of the student, referral to the school's Educational Management Team will be instituted.

PROCEDURES

The school administrator retains the final authority, commensurate with the Student's Rights and Responsibilities Policy, to determine which offenses warrant out-of-school suspension and which warrant an alternative. The primary disciplinary reasons which may lead to an in-school suspension are as follows:

- Smoking
- Cutting Class
- Vandalism
- Chronic Tardiness
- Insubordination
- Inappropriate Behavior/language
- Breaking School Rules
- Classroom Disruption
- Truancy
- Minor Fights (Scuffling)

Each suspension will be documented by completion of MCPS Form 560-6 "Report of Suspension." The number of in-school suspension days assigned for each disciplinary offense will be left to the discretion of individual school administrators but should not exceed three days.

The student's classwork will be obtained prior to the implementation of the in-school suspension whenever possible in order to maintain an academic program as similar to regular classroom experiences as possible. No student will be assigned to in-school suspension without appropriate academic materials being made available. In some instances, depending upon the disciplinary offense, academic assignments may be replaced by related work tasks such as collecting litter, cleaning graffiti, etc.

Students who are referred to the program wil remain in the in-school suspension facility at all times. They will be instructed to bring a lunch from home and report directly to the in-school suspension facility upon arrival at school. Students will be excluded from all extracurricular activities during the period of suspension.

EVALUATION

The teacher assistant will keep a daily log and anecdotal records on all students assigned to them.

The Office of Guidance/Alternative Programs will assess the program based on the following criteria:

1. Change in behavior based on observation by supervising teacher assistant, classroom teachers, and administrators
2. Feedback from parents
3. Feedback from students who have been assigned

A status report of this program will be submitted to the Board of Education in the spring of 1981.

EA:HP:pc

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